

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9956

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TAGS: PINT, PORS, ELAB, BL

SUBJ: GOB AND UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVES END CONFRONTATION

REF: LA PAZ 1444

1. ACCORDING TO THE LA PAZ PRESS, A FORMAL AGREEMENT RESOLVING THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE GOB AND THE UNIVERSITY SECTOR WAS SIGNED MARCH 6. THE STRIKE CALLED BY THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY AT LA PAZ, FEBRUARY 19, WAS ENDED (AS WAS A SUPPORTING HUNGER STRIKE OF MARCH 5). KEY PROVISIONS OF THE AGREEMENT INCLUDED A GOB PROMISE TO ACCELERATE THE LEGAL PROCESSES INVOLVING IMPRISONED UNIVERSITY MEMBERS; A GOB COMMITMENT TO REVIEW THE CASES OF EXILED STUDENTS; AND, A JOINT AGREEMENT TO HOLD STUDENT ELECTIONS IN BOLIVIAN UNIVERSITIES DURING JUNE OF THIS YEAR.

2. THE PRESS HAD REPORTED SIXTY UNIVERSITY MEMBERS DETAINED ORIGINALLY AND LATER STATED THAT FIFTY-THREE HAD BEEN RELEASED. THE GOB ANNOUNCED MARCH 4 THAT THE REMAINING SEVEN DETAINEES WERE BEING TURNED OVER TO THE ORDINARY JUDICIAL PROCESSES AND GIVEN A PUBLIC TRIAL UNDER THE LAW OF THE SECURITY OF THE STATE (SECTIONS D THROUGH H) AND ARTICLES 131-133 OF THE PENAL CODE. (TEXT OF GOB ANNOUNCEMENT IS BEING SENT UNCLASSIFIED

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TO THE DEPARTMENT.) THE PUBLIC CHARGES (KEEPING

ARMS, ENCOURAGING SABOTAGE AND TERRORISM, MAINTAINING FOREIGN CONTACTS FACILITATING SUCH ACTS, INCITING TO VIOLENCE, ETC.) AND THE MOVE FOR A PUBLIC TRIAL ARE DEPARTURES FROM THE PREVIOUS GOB PRACTICE OF HOLDING "POLITICAL PRISONERS" WITH FORMAL LEGAL ACTION.

3. COMMENT: THE UNIVERSITY SOLUTION WAS WELCOMED AND APPLAUDED AS REASONABLE AND FAIR BY THE PRESS. GIVEN THE PUBLIC CHARGES AND GOB DECISION TO PUBLICLY PROSECUTE, THE SEVEN DETAINEES ARE NO LONGER "POLITICAL PRISONERS" BUT ALLEGED CRIMINALS. THEIR TRIAL WILL BE WATCHED WITH INTEREST BY THE UNIVERSITY SECTOR. IN A SEPARATE BUT RELATED DEVELOPMENT ON THE EDUCATIONAL FRONT, RURAL AND URBAN TEACHERS WERE GRANTED A CROSS-THE-BOARD THIRTY-THREE PERCENT INCREASE OVER THEIR MONTHLY BASE SALARIES IN EXCHANGE FOR AN ADDITIONAL TWENTY-FOUR HOURS OF WORK PER MONTH (SEPTEL). MINERS AT SEVERAL MAJOR STATE-OWNED MINES WHO WERE OUT ON SYMPATHY STRIKE WITH THE STUDENTS, AND WHO WOULD HAVE STRUCK IN SUPPORT OF THE TEACHERS, HAVE REPORTEDLY ALL RETURNED TO WORK.

4. AFTER SOME FLOUNDERING, THE GOB SEEMS TO HAVE COME UP WITH ACCEPTABLE SOLUTIONS IN TWO IMPORTANT SECTORS. IN SO DOING, IT HAS BLUNTED THE LIKELIHOOD OF UNVIERSITY AND TEACHER TROUBLES SNOWBALLING INTO SERIOUS POLITICAL PROBLEMS FOR THE BANZER REGIME.
END COMMENT.
STEDMAN

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